

Maps Debunk Everything the NRA Has Told Us About Guns



By **Brian Frydenborg** November 19, 2013

11 upvotes

Yes, people kill people. But guns make a huge difference in how many people get killed.

Like any dangerous product — cars, airplanes, explosives — sensible regulation of guns clearly plays a positive role in reducing both misuse of this product and the number of deaths resulting from such misuse.

The map itself was part of [a scholarly study](#) by [researchers](#) from Boston Children's Hospital and published this March in JAMA Internal Medicine.

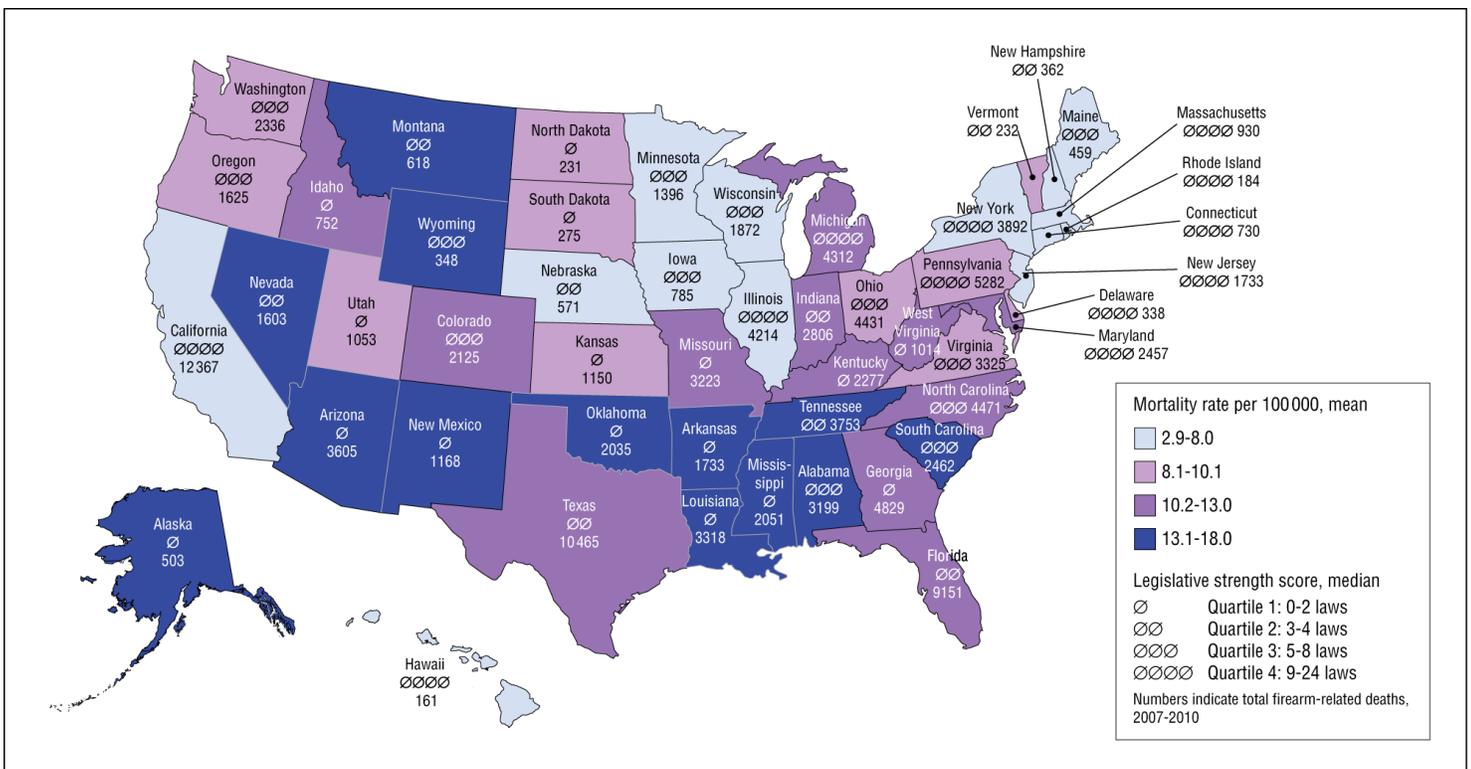


Image Credit: [JAMA Internal Medicine](#)

The map is not without exceptions and outliers, but the general trend is clear: States with more gun regulations had lower rates of gun deaths, and states with less gun laws had higher gun death rates, both in terms of suicide and homicide. That's certainly not [the message we get](#) from the National Rifle Association.

In the related study, the strength of gun laws was rated on a scale of 0 to 28.

Table 1. Scoring System for Firearm Legislative Strength Score^a

Legislation Intent	Description of Measures
Curb firearm trafficking (9 points)	
Gun dealer regulations (6 points)	State license required for firearm dealers Record keeping and retention by firearm dealers Report records to the state, and state retains records Mandatory theft reporting for all firearms by firearm dealers At least 1 store security precaution required Inspections by police allowed/required to inspect dealer inventories
Limit bulk purchases (1 point)	One handgun per month (exceptions possible)
Crime gun identification (1 point)	Ballistic fingerprinting or require microstamping on semi-automatic handguns
Report lost/stolen guns (1 point)	Mandatory reporting by firearm owners
Strengthen Brady background checks (8 points)	
Universal background check ^b (1 point)	All firearms Handguns only
Closed gun show loophole ^c (1 point)	Background check on firearm purchasers at gun shows
Permit to purchase (5 points)	Permits required to purchase firearms Fingerprinting of applicants required for identification Safety training and/or testing required Extend three-day limit for background checks Permit process involves law enforcement
Ammunition regulations (2 points)	Ammunition purchaser records kept/vendor license required Ammunition Brady check/permit required to purchase
Improve child safety (5 points)	
Childproof handguns (1 point)	Only authorized users are able to operate new handguns
Child safety locks ^d (2 points)	Integrated locks sold on all handguns External locks sold with all handguns Standards on all external locks –child safety locks certified
Child access prevention ^e (1 point)	Adults must store loaded guns in inaccessible place or lock the gun
Juvenile handgun purchases (1 point)	Must be 21 to purchase a handgun
Ban military-style assault weapons (2 points)	
Assault weapons ban (2 points)	Regulation of firearms with military-style features Maximum number of rounds per magazine 15 or less
Restrict guns in public places^f (4 points)	
No guns in workplace (1 point)	Employers not required to allow firearms in parking lots
No guns on college campuses (1 point)	Colleges are not required to allow firearms on campus
Not carrying a concealed weapon shall issue state (1 point)	Law enforcement is not required to issue a permit to carry a concealed weapon to all individuals who can legally own a firearm
No state preemption of local laws (1 point)	Local governments can enact firearm laws and regulations that are stricter than state laws
Overall possible points, 28	

^aTable data source, Brady Center State Scorecards.¹⁰^bStates receive a point for background checks on either all firearms or handguns only.^cStates with universal background checks on all firearms not eligible for gun show loophole points.^dOne point for either integrated or external locks.^eIf a child in the specified age ranges obtains a stored, loaded gun, the adult owner may be held criminally liable. Any age category receives credit: 16 to 17 years or younger, 14 to 15 years or younger, or 13 years or younger.^fPoints assigned for restriction of guns in public places to trained law enforcement and security and preserve local control over municipal gun laws.

Scores ranged from 0 (Utah) to 24 (Massachusetts):

Table 2. State Legislative Strength Scores and Firearm Fatality Rates per 100 000 Individuals per Year, 2007-2010^a

Rank	State	Legislative Strength Score, Median (Range) ^b	Firearm Fatalities, Mean (SD)		
			Overall	Suicide	Homicide
1	Massachusetts	22.5 (22-24)	3.4 (0.42)	1.7 (0.31)	1.7 (0.18)
2	California	22 (22-23)	8.0 (0.45)	4.0 (0.06)	4.0 (0.45)
	New Jersey	22 (22-24)	4.9 (0.19)	1.9 (0.04)	3.0 (0.27)
4	Connecticut	20 (19-20)	5.1 (0.76)	2.6 (0.40)	2.5 (0.39)
5	New York	19 (19-19)	4.8 (0.18)	2.1 (0.10)	2.7 (0.06)
6	Hawaii	16 (15-16)	2.9 (0.44)	2.3 (0.39)	0.7 (0.08)
	Maryland	16 (15-17)	10.5 (1.20)	4.1 (0.35)	6.3 (1.00)
8	Rhode Island	14 (13-14)	4.1 (0.61)	2.6 (0.70)	1.5 (0.25)
9	Illinois	11.5 (11-12)	7.9 (0.18)	3.3 (0.15)	4.7 (0.22)
10	Michigan	11 (10-11)	10.6 (0.05)	5.6 (0.22)	5.1 (0.22)
11	Delaware	9 (8-9)	9.5 (1.10)	4.6 (0.34)	4.8 (1.20)
12	Pennsylvania	8.5 (8-9)	10.1 (0.24)	5.7 (0.25)	4.3 (0.27)
13	Alabama	8 (8-8)	16.3 (0.73)	9.0 (0.64)	7.2 (0.99)
	North Carolina	8 (7-8)	11.7 (0.44)	7.0 (0.27)	4.6 (0.56)
	Virginia	8 (8-8)	10.1 (0.28)	6.5 (0.33)	3.4 (0.30)
	Washington	8 (8-9)	8.4 (0.12)	6.6 (0.29)	1.8 (0.10)
17	Iowa	7 (3-7)	6.2 (0.87)	5.2 (0.72)	0.9 (0.30)
18	Minnesota	6 (5-6)	6.4 (0.33)	5.2 (0.18)	1.2 (0.22)
	Oregon	6 (6-6)	9.9 (0.64)	8.5 (0.51)	1.3 (0.19)
20	Colorado	5 (5-5)	10.3 (0.54)	8.3 (0.47)	2.1 (0.16)
	Maine	5 (5-5)	8.0 (0.44)	6.8 (0.58)	1.1 (0.09)
	Ohio	5 (4-5)	9.1 (0.70)	5.5 (0.51)	3.6 (0.19)
	South Carolina	5 (5-6)	13.0 (0.24)	7.5 (0.64)	5.4 (0.29)
	Wisconsin	5 (4-5)	8.0 (0.45)	6.0 (0.24)	1.9 (0.34)
	Wyoming	5 (4-5)	15.5 (1.80)	14.6 (1.50)	1.3 (0.004)
26	Georgia	4 (4-5)	12.2 (0.37)	7.2 (0.56)	5.1 (0.58)
	Nebraska	4 (3-4)	7.6 (0.56)	5.2 (0.28)	2.3 (0.40)
	New Hampshire ^c	4 (3-4)	6.4 (0.51)	6.0 (0.86)	NA
	Tennessee	4 (4-4)	14.3 (0.54)	8.9 (0.34)	5.3 (0.44)
	Vermont ^c	4 (4-4)	8.7 (0.75)	7.8 (1.50)	NA
31	Florida	3 (3-4)	11.8 (0.45)	6.9 (0.33)	4.8 (0.48)
	Indiana	3 (2-3)	10.5 (0.36)	6.7 (0.40)	3.8 (0.21)
	Mississippi	3 (3-3)	16.8 (1.10)	9.3 (0.55)	7.4 (0.68)
	Nevada	3 (3-3)	14.9 (0.73)	10.9 (0.35)	3.9 (0.78)
	Texas	3 (3-3)	10.5 (0.21)	6.6 (0.33)	3.9 (0.28)
36	Montana	2.5 (2-3)	14.8 (0.48)	12.8 (0.72)	1.8 (0.41)
37	Arkansas	2 (2-2)	14.5 (0.78)	9.1 (0.52)	5.3 (0.44)
	Kansas	2 (2-4)	9.9 (0.58)	7.0 (0.47)	2.8 (0.41)
	Missouri	2 (2-2)	13.0 (0.56)	7.4 (0.43)	5.5 (0.67)
	North Dakota ^c	2 (2-2)	8.4 (0.16)	7.9 (0.48)	NA
	New Mexico	2 (2-2)	13.8 (0.22)	9.6 (0.26)	4.2 (0.33)
	South Dakota	2 (2-2)	8.2 (1.50)	7.3 (1.50)	0.9 (0.02)
	West Virginia	2 (2-2)	12.7 (1.30)	9.9 (0.88)	2.7 (0.45)
44	Arizona	1.5 (1-2)	13.6 (0.68)	8.9 (0.57)	4.8 (0.89)
	Idaho	1.5 (1-2)	11.8 (0.85)	10.8 (1.00)	1.1 (0.62)
46	Alaska	1 (1-1)	17.5 (2.80)	14.4 (2.70)	3.2 (0.87)
	Kentucky	1 (1-1)	12.6 (0.71)	9.2 (0.36)	3.3 (0.41)
	Louisiana	1 (1-2)	18.0 (0.85)	7.8 (0.54)	10.1 (0.73)
	Oklahoma	1 (1-1)	13.4 (0.41)	9.4 (0.58)	4.0 (0.33)
50	Utah	0.5 (0-1)	9.8 (1.30)	8.8 (1.30)	1.1 (0.19)

Abbreviations: CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; NA, not available.

^aData are from the WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)¹ and the legislative strength score.

^bLegislative strength score is the median of the annual scores for 2007 through 2010. The highest legislative strength score received the lowest rank. States with the same legislative strength score are listed in alphabetical order within that score.

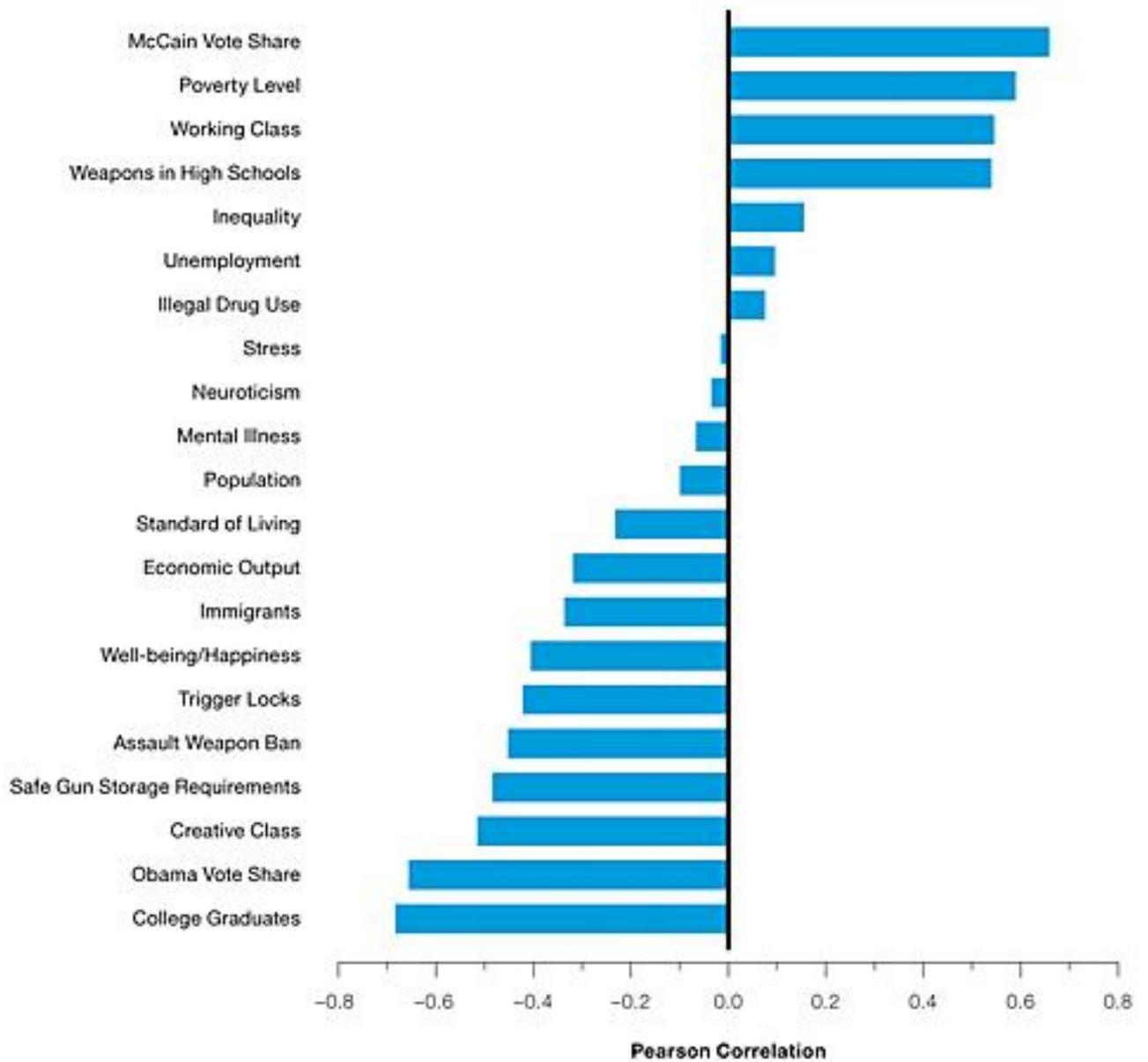
^cState with a low number of annual deaths (<20) from homicide. Mean rate was not available from CDC.

Direct causation could not be determined, but at the very least, such a strong correlation should make it clear that existing public policy in many states with lax gun laws comes at a high price: more dead mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and others.

In addition, higher firearm ownership rates were also heavily correlated with higher firearm fatalities, and lower ownership rates were correlated with stronger gun control legislation.

Now, if you're going to say, "Well, that's just ONE study!" To that, I will retort that the Center for American Progress released [another study](#) in April that pretty much said the same thing, and that showed that 10 states with the weakest gun laws had over twice the rate of gun violence as the 10 states with the strongest gun laws. Also, in 2011, a writer for *The Atlantic* found, with the help of a colleague, that the presence of gun laws in states had [a strong correlation](#) with less gun violence, as the chart and map below also illustrate.

Gun deaths per 100,000 people



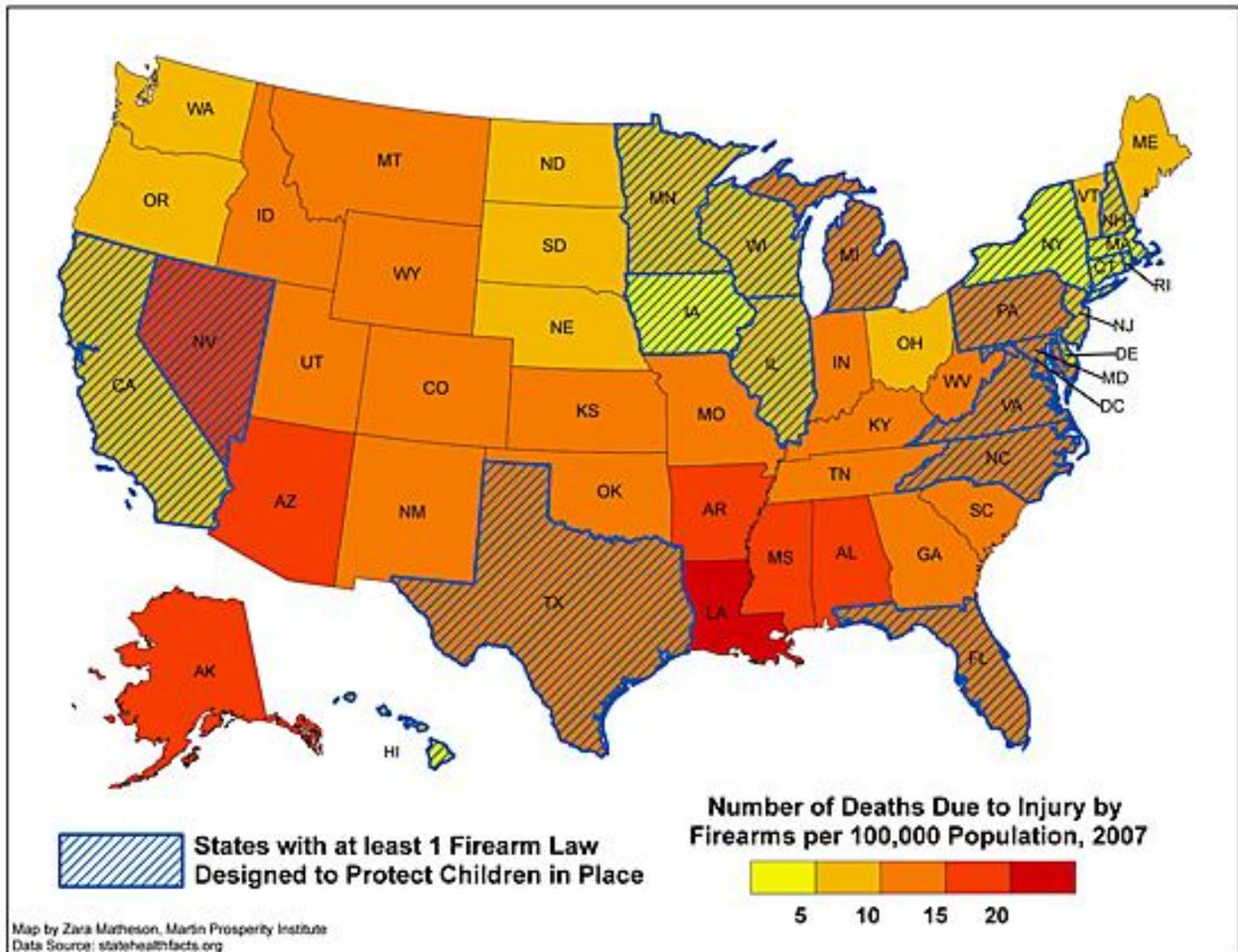


Image Credit: [Martin Prosperity Institute](#)

Some final food for thought: Building on an earlier [Harvard study](#), a brand new [study](#) published in the American Journal of Epidemiology showed that [the greatest](#) factor that determines gun suicide rates by state was not mental health issues, but rather gun ownership. And when it comes to gun ownership rates, well, [the U.S. is No. 1](#) by far.



Image Credit: [CNN](#)

Leaving the gun laws as they are in states with the highest gun death rates is akin to pulling the trigger on thousands. Some states are better at this public policy issue than others, and it's time for the laggards to learn from the high performers.

If you think I'm wrong, the burden of proof is on you to provide counter-evidence. Not just ideology.